

William Fitzhugh purchased the Ravensworth tract in 1685. Members of the Fitzhugh family eventually built several manor houses, dating from 1790. Of these, only Oak Hill still stands. Ossian Hall was burned as a training exercise in 1959 and serves as the symbol of the Annandale Volunteer Fire Department. In 1926, an unexplained fire destroyed Ravensworth Mansion.



Ossian Hall



Ravensworth Mansion



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FIRST CLASS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT 45  
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Braddock District Supervisor  
9002 Burke Lake Road  
Burke, VA 22015



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The "A Look Back at Braddock Project"  
proudly presents...

# Finding Braddock's True Gold



Oak Hill Mansion

4716 Wakefield Chapel Road, Annandale  
(Intersection of Wakefield Chapel Road and  
Braeburn Drive)

Celebrate local history at this  
free family festival at one of  
the oldest homes in Fairfax County  
Saturday, October 6, 2007  
Noon to 5 p.m.

Free shuttle service from parking at the  
Nancy Sprague Technology Center,  
4414 Holborn Avenue, Annandale



## The Fitzhugh Family and 17th & 18th Century Fairfax County

In 1670, William Fitzhugh (a.k.a. “William the Immigrant”) settled in Westmoreland County Virginia. He became a governor of the College of William and Mary and a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses. He also established one of the largest land grants in the “new world.” He owned land that stretched from present day Stafford County to Arlington County. The Fairfax County portion of this property, the 21,996-acre Ravensworth Tract, was described in 1694 as “upon the runs of Accotinke, Mussel Creek run and on the south side of the run Four Mile Creek.”

In the 1680s and 1690s, the Fairfax County land known at the time as Ravensworth was marketed to French Huguenots who were suffering under religious persecution. In 1686, William Fitzhugh wrote the following to entice the Huguenots to buy or lease this land: “The land I offer to sell or lease is scituate in this county, lyes within a mile and a half of Potomac River, and of two bold navigable creeks, is principal good land and is proper for Frenchmen, because more naturally inclined to vines, than yours or any about our neighborhood; and will engage to naturalize every soul of them at 3 per head without anymore or other matter of charge or trouble to them, whereby the heirs will be capacitated to inherit the fathers purchase.”

In 1730, tobacco warehouses were established at Little Hunting Creek and Occoquan. These helped to make Ravensworth a very prosperous tobacco plantation. By 1782, Ravensworth was the fourth largest plantation in Fairfax County, and had 203 slaves. In 1783, the north section of the Ravensworth tract was divided among the five grandsons of William Fitzhugh. The south section,

south of Braddock Road, remained largely intact until Robert E. Lee’s children inherited it. Richard Fitzhugh, one of the five grandsons, built Oak Hill in 1790. In the same year, Ossian Hall and another house named Dover were all constructed by the grandsons of William Fitzhugh. Today Oak Hill is the only remaining home built by the Fitzhugh family left in Fairfax County.

Built in 1790 by Richard Fitzhugh, Oak Hill was patterned after the rigid symmetry of the late Georgian style which was inspired by Italian Renaissance architecture. In 1830, an extension was added to the west side of the original house. In the 1930s renowned restoration architect Walter M. Ma-



Photo by Gil Donahue

comber restored and remodeled the house in a Colonial Revival style. Other than the sunroom added to the west side of the house in the 1970s, most of Oak Hill stands today as it did after the 1930s restoration. One feature of significance is the Colonial Revival wood paneling in the dining room which

is a replica Federal-period mantel that is detailed with a molded shelf, decorative carved medallions, marble facing and a marble hearth. The grounds of Oak Hill are also remarkable. From Braeburn Drive up to the front doors of Oak Hill is the original lined drive to the house. This drive is lined on both sides by boxwoods that date back to the 1790 construction of Oak Hill. It is unusual to find so much of the original landscaping including oak trees and boxwoods still intact over 200 years later.

The purchase of a historic easement on Oak Hill offers a unique opportunity to preserve an important piece of the history of our area for generations to come.

*Written by Paul Gilbert, Director of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority.*

## TRUE GOLD ACTIVITIES

Noon to 12:15 p.m.

- Opening Ceremonies

12:15 to 1 p.m.

- Conversation with sisters Bernice Watt Montgomery and Mary Pulley Watt in living room (former residents)

1 to 2 p.m. and 3 to 4 p.m.

- Liz Crowell, Park Authority, presents Oak Hill history
- Murder at Keene Mill presentation
- Civil War Drill on the lawn

2 to 3 p.m. and 4 to 5 p.m.

- Braddock District Haunted Legends
- History website demonstration from 2 to 4 p.m.

### Ongoing Activities

- Andrew Acosta Trio from 1 to 3 p.m.
- Schoolmarm Susan Kelly - Living History
- Kid’s activities sponsored by iplay Children’s Museum
- 42nd Virginia Infantry Civil War Encampment
- Free ice cream sundaes on the lawn
- **Braddock’s True Gold** book promotions

### Discover more about Braddock’s True Gold

• The book *Braddock’s True Gold, 20th Century Life in the Heart of Fairfax County* is available for purchase at the Braddock District Supervisor’s office located at 9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke, or at Maps & Publications on the first floor of the Fairfax County Government Center.

• *A Look Back at Braddock History* website was created by George Mason University’s Center for History and New Media in partnership with our A Look Back at Braddock Task Force to take you back in time. Supervisor Sharon Bulova will host the debut of this website in the Kings Park Library Community Room on Wednesday, October 24 at 7:30 p.m.

For more information, please contact Braddock District Supervisor Sharon Bulova’s office at 703-425-9300, TTY 711 or visit us at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/braddock](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/braddock)